PLANNING AN OUTREACH EVENT

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GACO

- The Government Agency Coordination Office (GACO) is a Procurement Technical Assistance Center (PTAC) established in 1985 at California University of PA
- The Slippery Rock Satellite office and our Pittsburgh satellite office were opened in 1989
- PTAC's are resource for businesses interested in selling products or services to federal, state and local government agencies

GACO

- Part of our program involves providing education and training opportunities to businesses in the form of procurement fairs and seminars

- Planning for these events starts one year in advance

  for procurement fairs and two months in advance for seminars

- This presentation will provide an overview of planning for an event broken down by the following topics:
  - Advanced planning
  - Preparation
  - Post event

Advanced Planning

Determine Budget for Event

- Procurement Fair – Between $20,000 - $30,000. Booth fees and registration fees offset some cost
- Seminar – Between $1,000 - $2,000. No fees charged

Site Location/Space Need

- Procurement Fair – Multiple rooms needed for seminars, exhibits, meals, overnight accommodations, etc.
- Seminar - One large room to hold anticipated number of of attendees

Booth Company

Procurement Fair Only - Four months in advance contact booth
companies
- Provide basic requirements for set up
- They create specs/floor plans for space usage and bid on job

Advanced Planning

Sponsors/Co-Sponsors

- Both Procurement Fairs/Seminars – Determine if you want to work
  with another agency or PTAC

Mailing/Emailing

- Procurement Fair
  - Create/update mailing list
  - Establish mailing/emailing time frames
    Brochure #1 – mail six weeks prior to event
    Brochure #2 – mail four weeks prior to event
    Email once a week every week after
  - Mailings go out to approximately 10,000 businesses

- Seminar
  - Create/update mailing list
  - Establish mailing/emailing time frames
    Flyer – mail four weeks prior to event
    Email once a week every week after
  - Mailings go out to approximately 2,600 businesses

Advanced Planning

Brochures/Flyers

- Procurement Fair
  - Design nine weeks prior to event (in-house)
  - Issue printing contract eight weeks prior to seminar
  - Print seven weeks prior to event
  - Save the Date flyer is designed one year in advance and handed out at the event being held

- Seminar
  - Design six weeks prior to event (in-house)
  - Printing done in-house
  - Print five weeks prior to event

Advanced Planning

Confirm Speakers/Participants

- Procurement Fair
  - Save the Date flyer specifically for invited participants is mailed out three months prior to event
- Seminar
  - Start contacting speakers two months prior to event

Note: Speakers/participants are generally included in brochures/flyers so the sooner they are confirmed the better.

Preparation

Registration

- Procurement Fair
  - Establish registration procedures for event
  - Create registration database (used for attendee count, verifying attendee information, exhibitors directory, and mail merges for various correspondence)
  - Print name badges as registrations come in

- Seminar
  - Create registration database (used for attendee count, verifying attendee information, and attendee list handout)
  - Print name badges as registrations come in

Note: Registration is an attendees first impression of the event

Preparation

Meals:

- Procurement Fair
  - Plan dinner, breakfast and breaks. Keep your budget in mind

- Seminar
  - Usually a continental breakfast

Handouts and Other Printed Material

- Procurement Fair
  - Prepare what you can as early as you can
  - Exhibitor's Directory printed as soon as all booth holders are confirmed and all information is checked for accuracy
  - Handouts and other printed material include Save the Date flyer, agenda, walk in registration forms, presentations, etc.

- Seminar
  - Prepare what you can as early as you can

Preparation

Finalize Details with Hotel or Other Event Site

- Both Procurement Fairs and Seminars
  - Food, technology needs, room arrangements, etc.

Planning Factor Rule

- 85% for procurement fair
- 60% for seminars

Post Event

Brainstorming

- Procurement Fair
  - Meet with key organizers to discuss the good, the bad and the ugly.
    Make suggestions at this time for improvements of future events

- Seminars
  - Discuss at meeting after event

Surveys/Critique Sheets

- Procurement Fair
  - Email critique sheets to participants that did not hand them in at
    event

- Seminars
  - Email critique sheets to all attendees – Survey Monkey

Post Event

Thank You Letters

- Procurement Fair
  - Send to all invited participants and speakers
- Seminars
  - Send to all speakers

Summary

- **No matter the size of the event, planning and preparation are key to making it successful**

- **Contact the PTAC's to arrange an event with them**

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